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# **NOVOE MYSHLENIE AND THE SOVIET MILITARY: THE IMPACT OF REASONABLE SUFFICIENCY ON THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE<sup>1</sup>**

by Theodore William Karasik and Thomas M. Nichols<sup>2</sup>

April 1989

## **INTRODUCTION**

Recently, a flood of new terms entered the Soviet lexicon: "New Thinking," "Defensiveness," "Sufficiency," and others. Likewise, there is a proliferation of explanations of these terms both in the West and, surprisingly, in the Soviet Union as well. The Soviet debate on these terms is far from over, however, and this makes defining their content difficult until the Soviets themselves finally close any of these issues.

One of these terms, "reasonable sufficiency" (*razumnaya dostatochnost'*) provides material for a wide-ranging civil-military and intra-military conflict on Soviet national security policy. Rather than attempt to define the content of reasonable sufficiency, this study looks at the concept in its domestic context as one of the tools used by the leadership to undermine and divide the Soviet military so it cannot function as an interest group against changes in doctrine and defense spending.

## **DEFINITIONS OF NEW THINKING AND REASONABLE SUFFICIENCY**

As propounded by Gorbachev, new thinking (*novoe myshlenie*) addresses the Soviet Union's need to adjust its outlook on military affairs in international relations. Briefly, the new thinking includes a devaluation of the role of technology in security; a reaffirmation of war and peace as problems soluble only through political rather than military means (in other words, soluble only through diplomacy and politics rather than through unilateral military measures); an acknowledgment of the reality that a state's one-sided efforts to gain security (especially in the military realm, where it can be difficult to separate offensive from

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<sup>1</sup> This is a combined version of two papers presented at the Air Force Intelligence Agency Conference entitled "The Soviet Union Towards the 21st Century: Soviet Military and Political Affairs in the Gorbachev Era," Washington, D.C., October 22, 1988 and the 21st Annual Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) in Honolulu, Hawaii, November 18, 1988.

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defensive measures) can be perceived as threatening and therefore make other states more insecure; a definition of security as attainable only by mutual rather than individual efforts; and an attempt to use the mechanisms of international organization to secure peace through the elimination of international social and economic disparities and inequalities.<sup>3</sup>

Reasonable sufficiency lies within the framework of the new thinking. In essence, proponents of reasonable sufficiency seem to argue that Soviet security can be maintained at a lower level of armaments, and that strictly symmetrical, tit-for-tat responses to Western arms programs are not necessary. The Soviet formulation maintains that the Soviet Union will not seek a greater level of security than other nations, but at the same time cannot accept military inferiority; however, there is still some confusion over what constitutes "inferiority," specifically, whether or not it should be interpreted in a strictly numerical sense. This kind of imprecise language means that the definition of reasonable sufficiency remains flexible, and thus continues to elicit substantial debate within the Soviet military.

Soviet military leaders view Gorbachev's definition of reasonable sufficiency in several forms. A pro-Gorbachev group (small though it is) articulates a version of reasonable sufficiency somewhat similar to that advocated by Gorbachev himself. Unlike Gorbachev, however, this group sees in reasonable sufficiency a rejection of unilateral or asymmetrical initiatives in arms control, while agreeing that strategic parity may not be required either. These leaders still see the West as a threat to Soviet interests but also see political methods as the primary means of achieving security. They also consider a reduction in defense spending to be necessary in order to create a healthy Soviet economy.

A more undecided group of military leaders promotes a variant of the concept called "sufficient defense" (*dostatochnaia oborona*). Here it is acknowledged that the military needs to reform in the abstract, but this is coupled with stiff opposition to the dramatic reductions in defense spending as advocated by Gorbachev. This group likewise rejects unilateral and asymmetrical responses in arms control, but also supports strategic parity.

Oppositionist military leaders resort to a standard phrase in Soviet military literature in their rejection of the Gorbachev program, "reliable defense" (*nadezhnaia oborona*). Reliable defense describes traditional Soviet thinking on security issues. This position rejects Gorbachev's intention to alter Soviet military doctrine and advocates that defense expenditures should be maintained or even grow. Its advocates argue that Soviet forces must prevent large scale destruction of the homeland during wartime and be able to defeat and destroy Western aggression. At the same time, these Soviet military leaders argue for reforms in the military that strengthen discipline and improve weaponry and equipment.

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<sup>3</sup>See Gorbachev's speech in *Materialy XXVII S' ezda Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1986, pp. 62-76.

## GORBACHEV AND THE GENESIS OF REASONABLE SUFFICIENCY

The genesis of reasonable sufficiency probably resulted from a policy decision made by senior members of the political leadership to achieve reform. Besides its rhetorical value, they saw one other strength in the concept: After Gorbachev introduced reasonable sufficiency, the military seemed unable to coordinate its responses.

Gorbachev spoke about reasonable sufficiency on several occasions. At first, Gorbachev's comments appeared to lack specific content about reasonable sufficiency.<sup>4</sup> For example, at a meeting of the Supreme Soviet in 1985, just eight months after assuming the post of General Secretary, Gorbachev mentioned reasonable sufficiency in vague terms:

The USSR and the US will have to reach a common understanding of what level of weapons on each side could be considered relatively sufficient.... We are convinced that the level of this sufficiency is much lower than that which the USSR and the United States in fact possess at the moment. This means that weighty practical steps for the limitation and reduction of weapons are perfectly possible, measures that not only will not lessen, but will strengthen security both for the USSR and the US, and the entire strategic stability of the world.<sup>5</sup>

In a report to the 27th Party Congress, Gorbachev gave the first detailed explanation of reasonable sufficiency. His explanation of reasonable sufficiency broke away from the concept of strategic parity and he argued to reduce nuclear arsenals and also suggested the need for a reduction in defense spending: "Our country stands for...restricting military potentials within the bounds of reasonable sufficiency. Security...can only be mutual, and if one considers international relations as a whole, it can only be universal."<sup>6</sup> In addition, Gorbachev's emerging ideas on reasonable sufficiency appeared in the 27th Party Congress program. The program emphasized in very strong terms the dominant party role in military affairs and also indicated a lower priority for defense needs for the first time:

The basic foundation of the strengthening of the defense of the socialist homeland is the Communist Party's guidance of military construction and the Armed Forces. Policy in the field of defense, and the country's security

<sup>4</sup>Gorbachev first mentioned reasonable sufficiency in Paris, France. See *Pravda*, October 4, 1985.

<sup>5</sup>*Pravda*, November 28, 1985.

<sup>6</sup>*Pravda*, February 26, 1986.



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policy, and Soviet military doctrine, which is purely defensive in nature, are worked out and implemented with the party playing the guiding role.<sup>7</sup>

A year after the 27th Party Congress, Gorbachev continued to advance the concept of reasonable sufficiency. In a speech to the Trade Union Congress in February, 1987, Gorbachev stated:

Now when the opponent's gamble on our backwardness has taken a serious shaking, imperialism is switching the emphasis on to something else: preventing the implementation of our plans for transformation, hindering them, slowing them down, and foiling them by the arms race....But we will not take a single step over and about the demands and requirements of reasonable, sufficient defense.<sup>8</sup>

However, Gorbachev's speech to the United Nations on December 7, 1988 focused on the unilateral withdrawal of equipment and troops from the Soviet periphery in conjunction with achieving reasonable sufficiency:

(These) reductions will be made on a unilateral basis...By agreement with our allies in the Warsaw Pact, we have made the decision to withdraw six tank divisions from the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, and to disband them by 1991.... The Soviet forces in those countries will be cut by 50,000 persons, and their arms by 5,000 tanks. [In addition], there will be in the (European part) of our country and on the territory of our European allies, the Soviet Armed Forces will be reduced by 10,000 tanks, 8500 artillery systems, and 800 combat aircraft.<sup>9</sup>

Three aspects of this compressed overview of Gorbachev's position on reasonable sufficiency are particularly noteworthy. First, it indicates Gorbachev's willingness to intervene in military affairs, even to the point of Khrushchev-like efforts at massive reductions. Second, it also shows that Gorbachev is powerful enough—or at least feels he is powerful enough—to implement his ideas. Finally, it reveals definite differences with the military concept of "sufficiency;" in particular, no mention is made of the need for the concept to be based on reciprocal measures in the West, something upon which the military has been insistent from the start.

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<sup>7</sup>*Pravda*, March 7, 1986.

<sup>8</sup>*Pravda*, February 26, 1987.

<sup>9</sup>*Pravda*, December 8, 1988.

## DOBRYNIN, YAKOVLEV, AND THE CIVILIANS

Both Foreign Policy Advisor Anatolli Dobrynin and Politburo Member Aleksandr Yakovlev are active participants in the drive to enshrine the idea of reasonable sufficiency in Soviet security policy.<sup>10</sup> Although they rarely refer to reasonable sufficiency, their actions suggest that they play an important role in defining the defense agenda.

Dobrynin became the first leader to propose an enhanced civilian role in the Soviet national security debate. In an article in *Kommunist*, Dobrynin stated that "immediate scientific analysis to [determine] the questions of what is the reasonable sufficiency in lowering the level of military potentials [is needed]:"<sup>11</sup> Although civilians did not immediately respond at that time, some did participate in the creation of civilian think tanks designed to address the issues raised by reasonable sufficiency. For example, under Dobrynin's direction, the International Department created a special section dealing with arms control. Headed by Lieutenant General Viktor Sharodubov, (who took part in the Soviet delegation to the SALT talks on INF) and staffed by civilian specialists, this body plans to strengthen arms control expertise in the International Department and to ensure that several points of view are incorporated into the policy process. This provides Gorbachev with a source of information on defense security issues.<sup>12</sup>

The early reaction to reasonable sufficiency was predictably negative; more alarming, however, was the fact that civilian analysts were probably incapable of rebutting military arguments with any intellectual authority. Major General Yuri Lebedev, chief of the Treaty and Legal Directorate of the General Staff, and his coauthor, A. Podberezkin, admitted as much when they noted that the experiences of recent years indicated that Soviet political analysts still are not competent to discuss military doctrinal matters.<sup>13</sup> This poor preparation,

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<sup>10</sup>Yakovlev's power continues to grow. His appointment to head the Central Committee Commission on International Affairs gives him unprecedented power over foreign policy. This must also include security aspects of Soviet foreign policy as well. In addition, it is surprising that Yakovlev, who actively depicts a threat from the United States which is both "imminent and irrational," supports reasonable sufficiency. See Aleksandr Yakovlev, *Po kraiu bezhny*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1985. Also, Dobrynin "retired" on September 30, 1988 from his position at the International Department and then was appointed a foreign policy advisor to Gorbachev on October 28, 1988.

<sup>11</sup>Anatolli Dobrynin, "Za bez'iadernyi mir, navstrechu 19 veku," *Kommunist*, No. 9, June 1986, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup>F. Stephen Larrabee, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Military," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1988, p. 1011.

<sup>13</sup>Yuri Lebedev and Aleksandr Podberezkin, "Voennye doktriny i mezhdunarodnaia bezopasnost'," *Kommunist*, No. 13, 1988, pp. 110-119.

(perhaps coupled with a continued lack of support for reasonable sufficiency even by some civilians as well as the ongoing complaints from supporters of the military) is possibly a catalyst behind Yakovlev's earlier challenge to Soviet civilian foreign policy specialists to undertake analyses of military doctrine. This appeal seemed to be stronger than the one articulated by Dobrynin:

The concept of sufficiency of military potentials, including under the conditions of a complete elimination of nuclear weapons— a concept which was advanced by the 27th CPSU Congress, needs to be revealed and filled with substance. Of no less importance is the task of analyzing, in the conjunction with the military specialists, our military doctrine, the strategic essence of which is based on the policy of averting nuclear war.<sup>14</sup>

The civilian policy establishment answered Yakovlev's call with several articles on everything from strategic stability to the appropriate role of the armed forces.

Before Gorbachev's rise to power, Soviet civilian analysts did not comment on Soviet military affairs. Thus, both Dobrynin's and Yakovlev's "invitations" provided civilians with sanctions to participate. Several civilians, who represent prestigious Moscow-based institutes with close ties to Gorbachev and Yakovlev, entered the debate espousing broad points of view. First, the director of the Institute for World Economics and International Relations, Yevgeni Primakov, a close associate of both Gorbachev and Yakovlev, argued that the USSR requires only a qualitative parity, which he defined in the McNamaresque language of finite deterrence as the ability to inflict "unacceptable damage" on an aggressor in response to a nuclear first strike.<sup>15</sup> In addition, Primakov also argued that military strength between the superpowers should be reduced to levels acceptable to both sides.<sup>16</sup> Second, three members of the Institute for the USA and Canada (IUSAC), Deputy Directory Vitalii Zhurkin (now director of the new Institute of Western Europe), section head Sergei Karaganov (now deputy director of the Institute of Western Europe), and senior researcher Andrei Kortunov (head of the international security department at the IUSAC) argued for reasonable sufficiency in Soviet military doctrine. The authors also noted that a reduction in military spending would release economic resources for Gorbachev's reform program ("The need to shift to sufficiency is also the result of economic factors"). Furthermore, they

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<sup>14</sup>Aleksandr Yakovlev, "Dostizhenie kachestvenno novogo sostoianiia sovetskogo obshchestva i obshchestvenno nauku," *Kommunist*, No. 8, 1987, p 18.

<sup>15</sup>FBIS-SOV-87-073, April 16, 1987, p. F1.

<sup>16</sup>*Pravda*, July 10, 1987.



advocated unilateral cuts in Soviet forces and criticized the current policy of maintaining armed forces capable of countering all potential enemies.<sup>17</sup>

Other prominent Soviet commentators sought to redefine the nature of the Western threat. For example, *Izvestia* political commentator Aleksandr Bovin suggested in an November 8, 1987 article in *Moskovski Novosti* that the traditional Soviet assessment of the West's intentions to wage war to eliminate socialism might be incorrect. He argued that in the nuclear age there exists a desire for self-preservation. In addition, Chief of the Central Committee International Department Valentin Falin noted the political ramifications of implementing reasonable sufficiency.<sup>18</sup> He stated that the problem of security became mostly political and military solutions are impossible to achieve. Falin also articulated his views on the Soviet television program "Studio Nine" on October 9, 1988. In a roundtable discussion on reasonable sufficiency, which also included then First Deputy Chief of the General Staff Vladimir Lobov, Falin defined reasonable sufficiency according to the definitions stated by Gorbachev. However, Lobov countered by advocating sufficient defense. Thus, Soviet television also became the latest forum for defining Soviet security issues and promotes discussion of these issues by millions of television viewers.<sup>19</sup>

#### **SHEVARDNADZE AND THE DEFENSE AGENDA**

While the civilians criticize the military, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze appears to directly threaten the interests of the military in determining Soviet security dilemmas and needs. While Shevardnadze may not be an articulate foreign policy analyst in his own right, he is nonetheless a close Gorbachev ally and confidante, and thus his statements provide insight into and amplification of the General Secretary's thinking.

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<sup>17</sup>Vitalii Zhurkin, Sergei Karaganov, and Andrei Kortunov, "Razumnaia dostatochnost' - ili kak razorvat' pochnyi krug," *Novoe Vremia*, No. 40, 1987, pp. 13-15. This article later appeared in *SShA*, No. 12, December 1987, and a slightly altered version was published in *Kommunist*, No. 1, January, 1988, under the title of "Vyzovy bezopasnosti-starye i novye."

<sup>18</sup>Falin's appointment to head the International Department occurred on October 20, 1988. He made his comment while chief of APN, or *Novosti*. Falin's expertise on Western Europe will most likely shape the Soviet Union's outlook on security issues and ultimately contribute to the reasonable sufficiency debate. A lessening of tensions in Europe would contribute to lower defense expenditures in the Warsaw Pact.

<sup>19</sup>An example of citizens becoming involved in the defense debate occurred on Soviet television on October 30, 1988. During a live interview at GUM (Moscow's largest department store) with representatives of the consumer goods industry, a GUM customer grabbed the microphone and said, "We will never resolve the problem of deficit goods without the demilitarization of our economy!" "RFED/RLD Daily Report," *SOVSET*, October 31, 1988.

Shevardnadze appears to be telling the military what it should do in terms of the new thinking in security issues and defense spending. For example, at a Foreign Ministry conference on July 25, 1988, Shevardnadze stated that the 19th Party Conference set the stage for the strengthening of civilian control of the military:

From the party conference decisions to create the constitutional-plenipotentiary mechanism follows the need to introduce a legislative procedure in accordance with which all departments concerned with military and military-industrial activity will be under the control of the supreme nationwide elected bodies.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, in a front page article in the weekly *Argumenty i Fakty* of September 10-16, 1988, Shevardnadze argued that the USSR made serious and costly mistakes in military policy due to a lack of adequate controls. He stated that the military budget, defense construction, and the use of Soviet forces outside of the country should be monitored by a *civilian* body that is elected nationwide and not by the Defense Council. This argument is currently debated by those elected to the newly created Congress of People's Deputies.

Shevardnadze is also instrumental in increasing the involvement of civilian specialists in Soviet military affairs.<sup>21</sup> For example, the Arms Control and Disarmament Directorate, headed by Viktor Karpov and Lieutenant General Konstantin Mikhailov, is intended to erode the monopoly on military data in the Soviet Union. In addition, the Scientific Control Center in the Soviet Foreign Ministry, headed by one of the ministry's top arms control specialists, Vladimir Shustov, also assists in collecting military data that were unavailable just a few years ago. These bodies assist the reformers in the Politburo to control and integrate the military into Gorbachev's aspirations for reform.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>*Pravda*, July 26, 1988, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup>It is interesting to note that the Soviet Foreign Ministry is becoming more involved in the publishing of materials related to Soviet security issues instead of the Ministry of Defense. For example, a book on the history of the Warsaw Pact entitled *Organizatsiia Varshavskogo Dogovora, 1955-1985, Dokumenty i materialy*, Politicheskoi literatury, Moscow, 1986, was released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs almost a year after Shevardnadze took over the post of Foreign Minister.

<sup>22</sup>Larrabee, p. 1011.

## A DIVIDED SOVIET MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

The Soviet leadership's drive towards reasonable sufficiency and reform created a division of opinion in the Soviet military.<sup>23</sup> Former First Deputy Minister of Defense and Chief of the General Staff Marshal Sergei Akhromeev<sup>24</sup> adhered closely to Gorbachev's intended use of reasonable sufficiency, with the notable exception of his insistence that the concept must be influenced by Western actions— a corollary Gorbachev seems to have accepted at least rhetorically. (Akhromeev did not insist on strict parity but rather endorsed a need for a "rough equilibrium" of forces.) He endorsed the cornerstone of the new thinking in February 1987 in an explicit acknowledgment of the tenet that security issues can and should be resolved through political means.<sup>25</sup> Akhromeev, of course, played a key role in arms control negotiations including those leading to the successful conclusion of the INF treaty. In a May 9, 1987 article in *Krasnaia Zvezda* Akhromeev joined the civilians by arguing for political means to prevent war and seemed to suggest that an additional military buildup would be unnecessary. He also attacked his fellow officers for not participating in the new political thinking.<sup>26</sup>

Even Akhromeev had few choices, however, and Gorbachev reached those limits on December 7, 1988. There is plenty of evidence to support the belief that Akhromeev opposed unilateral cuts for some time. The day before his resignation, he wrote in the Bulgarian press:

Errors in evaluating the likely nature of aggression and in forecasting the possible results of such an aggression are always dangerous and, especially given the defensive nature of our strategy, may entail serious consequences.

Even worse, in his view:

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<sup>23</sup>See R. Hyland Phillips and Jeffrey I. Sands, "Reasonable Sufficiency and Soviet Conventional Defense," *International Security*, Fall 1988 for a listing of the military and civilian responses to reasonable sufficiency.

<sup>24</sup>Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov announced Akhromeev's "retirement" due to health reasons on December 7, 1988 in New York City.

<sup>25</sup>*Sovetskaia Rossiia*, February 21, 1987.

<sup>26</sup>*Krasnaia Zvezda*, August 13, 1988.

Certain influential circles in the West are now more realistic in evaluating the situation in the Soviet Union and within its Armed Forces, as well as the disastrous consequences which the arms race may produce for world peace. *Other, no less influential circles, however, are relying, as in the past, on the "position of strength" as regards the Soviet Union, are trying to frighten our country and to extort one-sided actions from us.* [Emphasis added]<sup>27</sup>

This was not new from Akhromeev: it was basically what he told the Party aktiv meeting at the General Staff in August 1988.<sup>28</sup> He made this statement even earlier, in January:

In conditions of the constant military threat being created by the active military preparations of imperialism, defense sufficiency cannot be interpreted one-sidedly, without regard to the developing correlation of forces. It would be even more of a mistake to understand it as unilateral disarmament, a unilateral lessening of our defense.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore:

The limits of defense sufficiency are not set by us, but by the practical actions of the United States and the NATO bloc and their attempts to have a military capability that would ensure military superiority over us.<sup>30</sup>

In March 1988 Akhromeev delivered a stinging attack on NATO policies, and argued that "in reality (i.e., despite NATO claims), there is an approximate parity (*paritet*) between the WTO and NATO in the area of armed forces and conventional weapons." Note that he did not use the usual word, *ravnovesie* (equilibrium), choosing instead the cognate for parity, with its more strictly numerical connotations.<sup>31</sup> This did not bode well for a General Secretary who was trying to move security issues away from strict bean-counts.

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<sup>27</sup> Marshal Akhromeev on Military Restructuring," FBIS-SOV-88-237, December 9, 1988, p. 1. The original appeared in Bulgarian in *Rabotnichesko Delo* on December 6, 1988.

<sup>28</sup> *Krasnaia Zvezda*, August 13, 1988.

<sup>29</sup> Warsaw Pact Military Doctrine Described," FBIS-SOV-88-001, January 4, 1988, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> *Krasnaia Zvezda*, March 20, 1988.

Divisions in the General Staff were no less raucous— or confusing. Lobov argued for sufficient defense, stating that sufficient defense is necessary in "...maintaining, training, and using armed forces" while pursuing arms control agreements.<sup>32</sup> He also took a more conciliatory line, however, on the subject of asymmetries, a key barrier to many officers' acceptance of reasonable sufficiency. Unlike others (including such notables as Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy Admira' Chernavin), Lobov accepted the idea that there are legitimate asymmetries that might concern NATO strategists.<sup>33</sup>

Another Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Colonel General Makmut Gareev, advocated reliable defense.<sup>34</sup> He cited a growing threat from imperialism and the need to preserve parity with NATO and the United States.<sup>35</sup> Gareev, like his "co-religionist" Colonel General Volkogonov, also attacked those who believe in the conceptual underpinnings of the putative Western threat. Last June, Gareev sounded off during an interview with *Argumenty i Fakty*:

In all branches of activity of the Armed Forces many new and complex questions arise. A fundamental question— about the reality of the military threat to us from the imperialist states. Certain press organs have begun to cast doubt on the presence of such a threat, and consequently, on the necessity of defense measures, of the defense of the Fatherland.... Positive international changes...[must also be considered along with] military preparations of the imperialist states.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, Gareev stated that a real military threat continues to exist. He admitted that Soviet doctrine is indeed defensive, but apparently only during the *initial* repulsion of aggression. Finally, Gareev asserted that NATO simply isn't ready to deal with the USSR

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<sup>32</sup>Soviet Television, *Studio Nine*, October 15, 1988. Lobov was appointed First Deputy Chief for the Warsaw Pact on January 26, 1989.

<sup>33</sup>*Krasnaia Zvezda*, June 14, 1988. See also Chernavin's article entitled, "Problemy Tikhogo okeana: Sderzhannost' dolzhna byt' vzaimnoi," *Krasnaia Zvezda*, December 7, 1988.

<sup>34</sup>It was reported in the December 28, 1988 issue of *Krasnaia Zvezda* that the General Staff Party Conference criticized Gareev. This might be related to his harsh views on reasonable sufficiency.

<sup>35</sup>Makmut Gareev, "Sovetskaia voennaia nauka", *Zashchita Oteschestva*, No. 11, 1987.

<sup>36</sup>*Argumenty i Fakty*, No. 39, 1988.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

in good faith.<sup>37</sup> (This latter point is echoed by a *Krasnaia Zvezda* reviewer in September 1988 who said that "realistic tendencies" in NATO military policy are not yet "dominant.")<sup>38</sup>

If the civilians hoped that the new Chief of the General Staff, General Mikhail Moiseev,<sup>39</sup> would impose some unity on the situation, they must be disappointed. Moiseev echoed Gareev word-for-word recently:

Thus, the presence of a military threat on the side of imperialism is a fundamental question. And from this, whatever the social opinion around it will be, the success of much depends on the realization of the party directives on defense. Meanwhile, some authors in our publications try to cast doubt on the reality of the military threat and on the rectitude of defense measures that have been adopted.<sup>40</sup>

And:

Precipitousness in any matter is dangerous. And this is all the more so when we are talking about the preservation of peace and the defense of the nation. Here it is especially important, as they say, "not to lose touch with the earth." Their reality is that the USA, for example, has not given up, and is not thinking of giving up, [even] one of its military-technical programs. Moreover, they are talking about equipping their armed forces with the kind of weapons systems for which the search for countermeasures will demand many times more time and resources from the Soviet Union. Thus the matter here is not some sort of "imaginary military threat" to our country was invented, as some think, by military men, but in the urgent necessity of a search for new ways to guarantee the reliable defense of the peaceful labor of the Soviet people.<sup>41</sup>

Moiseev attempted to support two essentially conflicting arguments; one that accepts limits on military growth, the other that warns of a harsh "reality" in which the West will quickly outpace the USSR in the race for military-technical superiority. Meanwhile, Gorbachev's statements repeatedly downplayed the dominance of technology in military affairs; either Moiseev disagreed or was unaware of the implications of his statement.

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<sup>38</sup>*Krasnaia Zvezda*, September 13, 1988.

<sup>39</sup>Moiseev's appointment occurred on December 15, 1988 and his promotion from Colonel General to General occurred on February 15, 1989.

<sup>40</sup>*Krasnaia Zvezda*, February 23, 1989.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

Other signs of trouble existed within the General Staff. Akhromeev's then senior deputy, General Vladimir Varennikov,<sup>42</sup> in a piece highly critical of further arms negotiations with the West, identified reasonable sufficiency as "a reliable defense and the strengthening of parity between the USSR and the United States."<sup>43</sup> Major General V.A. Kuklev, apparently yet another new arrival to the General Staff, also exhibited some ambiguity about the Gorbachev program. His responses during an interview about the Moscow summit were entirely uncontroversial, approving of the business of the summit while chiding then President Reagan for lecturing the USSR about human rights.<sup>44</sup> Recently, however, Kuklev challenged Western estimates of the European balance. Moreover, Kuklev made an observation on the meaning of unilateralism (and by extension, on reasonable sufficiency) that may catch on among the military: He stressed that the Soviet action is unilateral, but added that "we have the right to expect an adequately significant answer from the other side."<sup>45</sup> He is backed by *Krasnaia Zvezda* reviewer M. Ponomarev in an otherwise supportive article. At the recent NATO session, Ponomarev wrote, "...talk was not about responding steps...but how to demand yet greater concessions from the USSR."<sup>46</sup>

Major General Lebedev also voiced his ire over the Western reaction to Gorbachev's cuts that unilateral reductions were not a propaganda move, nor does it injure Soviet security interests. Nonetheless, they are deeply significant, and Lebedev was upset at the implication that they were not: "However, judging from some statements in the West, their scale and depth are not yet acknowledged by everyone."<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile, other senior officers were either at odds with the military opposition or chose to restrain themselves. Yazov's successor at the Soviet Ministry of Defense cadres desk, General D.S. Sukhorukov, is somewhat evasive in this exchange in January 1989 when asked if Gorbachev's reductions would hurt the nation's defense capability:

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<sup>42</sup>Varennikov's appointment as Commander in Chief of the Ground Forces occurred on February 16, 1989.

<sup>43</sup>V. Varennikov, "Na strazhe mira i bezopasnosti narodov", *Partiinaiia zhizn'*, No. 5, March 1987, p. 10.

<sup>44</sup>*Krasnaia Zvezda*, June 1, 1988.

<sup>45</sup>*Krasnaia Zvezda*, December 28, 1988.

<sup>46</sup>*Krasnaia Zvezda*, December 11, 1988.

<sup>47</sup>*Krasnaia Zvezda*, December 16, 1988.

With regard to reductions in the Armed Forces, the chief problem in cadre policy in the army and navy will be to ensure their full combat readiness on the basis of our defensive doctrine. Basic efforts will be directed toward instilling in officers a high feeling of responsibility...<sup>48</sup>

In other words, perhaps: My job is cadres, and I'm not going to answer the question. It is important to remember that when Lebedev answered the same questions, he responded with a flat denial, unlike Sukhorukov.

Another indication of some sort of problem within the General Staff is noted in former Commander in Chief of the Warsaw Pact Forces Marshal Viktor Kulikov's speech at the recent party conference:

In his speech, MSU V. Kulikov...stressed that...the plans for combat preparedness in a series of military districts do not correspond with the abilities of the troops. In new conditions a new mechanism of discharge [of duties] is needed at all levels. New. Something that allows the attainment of qualitative parameters to be guaranteed. There is no alternative.

Kulikov continued:

A subject of special concern in the current period was the work of the General Staff and all of its *podrazdelenii* and party organizations on the elimination of shortcomings noted by the Central Committee of the party in June 1987. And in the report as well as in the speeches it was noted that the work conducted has been great. But this is only a part of the matter. Approaches have changed principally not only in the organization of duty (i.e. *boevogo dezhurstva*) and service in the troops, including the solving of extraordinary problems in peacetime, but also in the theoretical bases of a whole series of standing conceptions. In consideration of the defensive military doctrine, plans are being reworked, and documents and regulations are being defined more precisely and perfected; other work is being carried on as well.<sup>49</sup>

Kulikov, unfortunately, did not elaborate on the Central Committee's criticisms, but it seemed that directorates charged with military science (Gareev again) were slow to react to new changes: Remember, June 1987 is also the same month the Warsaw Pact announced the new doctrine in Berlin.

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<sup>48</sup>*Krasnaia Zvezda*, January 14, 1988.

<sup>49</sup>*Krasnaia Zvezda*, December 28, 1988.



Moiseev partly confirmed this possibility:

One of the most complex problems of military science is the prevention of war. Such a task was never before put before our Armed Forces. It requires deep scientific research and working out of concrete recommendations to the organs of direction, to the troops and the naval forces. It has been put before us to generalize experience and realize in practice the tenets of a defensive military doctrine, and to work out unified views and prevention of aggression. *Together with this, it must be noted that military-scientific organizations called upon to provide preliminary deep working through of these questions often lag behind. In part, one of the questions that has been insufficiently worked through is connected with the organization and conduct of combat actions of a defensive character.*<sup>50</sup> [Emphasis added]

This "lag" may be behind Marshal Kulikov's cryptic statement at a recent General Staff party conference about remedying "shortcomings" in General Staff work.

Overall, it appeared that Akhromeev and his deputies on the General Staff were divided on the issue of reasonable sufficiency, and this continued to fuel arguments in the General Staff, as is evident from the statements of Moiseev and others. As a result of these disagreements, the General Staff's influence in this phase of policy formulation is being challenged.<sup>51</sup> This may be significant in respect to the critical budget planning phase for the 13th Five Year Plan (1991-1996). However, the Soviet General Staff understands fully that a stagnant economy is not in the best interests of the country and might reluctantly accept unilateral arms control initiatives and greater reform of the military.

Soviet Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov is a more confusing case, in that he seemed to endorse both the concepts of sufficient defense and reliable defense. He defined sufficient defense as the minimum necessary and the highest quality of armed forces and armaments capable of ensuring the country's defenses.<sup>52</sup> However, Yazov does not endorse asymmetrical and unilateral arms control initiatives. Instead, he defended parity as the decisive factor in preventing war and advocates that Soviet forces cannot remain static. In

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<sup>50</sup>Moiseev, 1989.

<sup>51</sup>Ellen Jones, "Defense R&D Policymaking in the USSR," in Jiri Valenta and William Potter (eds.), *Soviet Decision Making for National Security*, Boston, George Allen and Unwin, 1984, p. 129. Jones argued that the General Staff played an intricate role in defense planning for several decades.

<sup>52</sup>This viewpoint is expressed by Yazov in an article he wrote in *Die Welt*, October 21, 1988, p. 2.

addition, Yazov asserted that "[the Soviet Union is] not the one who sets the limits of sufficiency, it is the actions of the United States and NATO"<sup>53</sup> which support a symmetrical response. Moreover, Yazov addressed reliable defense in his 1987 book, *Na strazhe sotsializma i mira*. In it, he states that "...the reliable defense of the Soviet people relies on the success of all tasks given to the army and the navy based on Soviet military doctrine."<sup>54</sup> This is most likely an expression of the tension between Yazov's loyalties to the leadership and his instincts as a career field commander.

The Chief of the Main Political Administration of the Soviet Army and Navy, General Aleksei Lizichev supported sufficient defense. Lizichev rejected unilateral arms cuts and hints that defense spending must be maintained at current levels:

And today expenditures on defense, the number of personnel in the Army and Navy, the quantity and quality of weapons and military equipment are defined exclusively by the demands of the Fatherland and the collective defense of the gains of socialism. In our country, nothing more is being done than is necessary.<sup>55</sup>

However, Lizichev also recognized the benefits of a political dialogue concerning new thinking in Soviet security issues. For example, he stated that, "To any sensible person it is clear that peace-loving initiatives, coming from a powerful state, are not evidence of weakness but rather are a manifestation of the necessity in the modern era for new political thinking."<sup>56</sup>

Finally, several members of the Soviet Ministry of Defense promoted the concept of reliable defense. For example, First Deputy Minister of Defense and Commander in Chief of the Warsaw Pact Forces General Petr Lushev argued that parity is necessary and states that any army must "train to use all the weapons, all the means and methods of warfare that the enemy possesses or may possess."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>*Pravda*, July 27, 1987.

<sup>54</sup>Dmitri Yazov, *Na strazhe sotsializma i Mira*, Voenizdat, Moscow, 1987, p. 26.

<sup>55</sup>Aleksei Lizichev, "Oktiabr' i leninskoe uchenie o zashchite revolyutsii," *Kommunist*, No. 3, 1987, pp. 87-88. For more on Lizichev and new thinking, see Thomas M. Nichols, "The Military and 'The New Political Thinking': Lizichev on Leninism and Defense," *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 80/87, February 26, 1987.

<sup>56</sup>Lizichev, pp. 85.

<sup>57</sup>*International Affairs*, No. 9, 1987. It is interesting to note that the conservatives appeared to support a letter writing campaign against reasonable sufficiency. For example, a letter from Captain Third Rank A. Petrov prior to the 19th Party Conference stated, "We have no right to allow the loss of military parity with the West which we had difficulty in achieving. Many officers on our ship share my opinion." See *Krasnaia zvezda*, June 4, 1988, p. 1. In addition, two new books recently published argued for a stronger naval presence as new thinking and reasonable sufficiency help to deny the Soviet Union a fully

By contrast, however, Lushev's support of reliable defense is tepid compared with the vitriol of his predecessor, Marshal Viktor Kulikov.<sup>58</sup> Kulikov, recognizing that his theater would be the first affected by a defensive doctrine based on reasonable sufficiency, argued that Europe is the "most explosive place on Earth" and he argued for maintaining the status quo in terms of military strength.<sup>59</sup>

On May 29, 1987, the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact promulgated a new military doctrine based on defensive concepts. The new defensive doctrine prohibited the use of military force unless a Warsaw Pact member became the victim of armed aggression; renounced the first use of nuclear weapons, and stated that the Warsaw Pact has no territorial ambitions against any state either in Europe or outside of it.<sup>60</sup> It is also interesting to note that Kulikov is listed at the very end of the attendee list, even behind the East German diplomat Herbert Krolikowski. This indicates Gorbachev's attempted subjugation of Kulikov.

Finally, Commander for the Soviet PVO (Air Defense Troops) General Ivan Tretyak did not support Gorbachev's reasonable sufficiency or, indeed, any form of sufficiency. He expressed publicly his disregard for defense cutbacks and charged that the doctrine of reliable defense is not enough "to assure the final destruction of the enemy" and insisted that "the defense of the USSR should be absolute." Tretyak also warned against being "lured by the apparent benefits" of change in the Soviet defense posture.<sup>61</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The evidence of the past few years indicates that the Soviet Ministry of Defense appears to be divided on the issue of reasonable sufficiency, reflecting some success on the part of the leadership to use the concept as a divisive tool in controlling the military agenda. However, this divisiveness may not last. Disagreements between the services and within the Ministry of Defense are obviously not nearly as great as those between the military and the

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operational blue water navy. These books are the memoirs of Fleet Admiral of the Soviet Union Nikolai Kuznetsov and a book on naval strategy under the editorship of Fleet Admiral Nikolai Gorshkov. The Kuznetsov book revived the debate on the need for more submarines and aircraft carriers, something the Soviet Navy did not want to give up, while Gorshkov's book basically argued that any enemy "should be smashed."

<sup>58</sup>Lushev replaced Kulikov on February 2, 1989.

<sup>59</sup>Nichols, 1987.

<sup>60</sup>For an analysis on the role of the new thinking in the Warsaw Pact, see Theodore William Karasik, "Current Perspectives on the Warsaw Treaty Organization, *Current World Leaders*, Santa Barbara, CA, December 1988, pp. 899-910.

<sup>61</sup>*Moscow News* (English Edition), No. 8. 1988.

civilians overall, and Gorbachev's unilateral cuts may have accelerated a kind of military *sblizheniie* (rapprochement), a closing of whatever gaps may have opened over the issue since 1986.

Still, the existence of the reasonable sufficiency debate is significant in itself. The discussion moved from a loose set of conceptual ideas made by Gorbachev to arguments which culminated in deep divisions within the military. Routines, norms, and values of the Soviet military are being disturbed by Gorbachev's promulgation of reasonable sufficiency and associated concepts and doctrine. This is not surprising: Reasonable sufficiency, a subset of new thinking, reflects a growing attack on the military that began in the early 1980's.<sup>62</sup>

Gorbachev and his followers wish to redefine who will decide the nature of the external threat to the Soviet Union. They use reasonable sufficiency as an ideological tool to divide the military, thus weakening the military cadres' resistance to doctrinal and structural reform. Gorbachev and others want to control the ideological and functional interests of the military and they pursue the policy of reasonable sufficiency forcefully and consistently. As a result of this policy, the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff's monopoly on defense policy development appears to be broken. Whether the civilians will maintain the momentum and expertise to exploit this breakthrough remains to be seen.

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<sup>62</sup>For more information on the Party's attack on the military leadership, see Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command, 1976-1986*, RAND Report R-3521-AF, June, 1987, pp. 38-44.